

TERROR

# TALES

FROM THE

# CRYPT

FEATURING



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE OLD MITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER





## IF YOU HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO FIND 'MAD' ON YOUR LOCAL NEWSSTAND...

- ① Look harder! It may be at the bottom of the pile.
- or... ② Ask your dealer to send threatening letters to his wholesaler, demanding MAD...
- or... ③ Send the attached subscription coupon which gets you 60¢ worth of comic books for 75¢.
- or... ④ Give up the whole business and spend your time on something worth while!

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Please send me the next six issues  
of MAD (mailed in strong mailing  
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NAME	ADDRESS	City	State	Date
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# THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HUH HUH. WELL, ALL I CAN SAY IS... YOU'RE EITHER FEAR OR FRIENDS FOR PLUMMING DOWN GOOD OLD U.S. SWAG-RENCH FOR THIS READING RAB. IN ANY CASE - GREETINGS SHOULD! WELCOME ONCE MORE TO THE CRYPT OF TERROR. TO THE PASTORAL PAGES OF TRUE... THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S MAN. I'M READY TO FINISH OFF THE EVIL FESTIVITIES WITH AN ODD TALE TOLD TO ME BY AN ODD TELLER OF ANY TALE... A TRUNK. LISTEN NOW, TO THE STEALER'S OWN HORROR-STORY, WHENCE IT CALLED...

## TIGHT GRIP!



THE LAYERS OF DUST THAT HAD SETTLED UPON ME OVER THE YEARS HAVE BEEN SCRUBBED AWAY, AND NOW I LIE UPON WILMA'S BEDROOM FLOOR, MY LID PLUMBED HIGH, SINGING HAPPILY AND SMALL-DWELLING THE HEAVILY FOLDED CLOTHES SHE IS BUSILY PACKING INTO MY TRUNK. I FEEL CLEAN AND FRESH AND NEW AND ALIVE AGAIN AFTER LYING DEAD FOR SO LONG IN THE SILENT LITTERED ATTIC. AND THERE IS A JOY WITHIN ME THAT MIRRORS WILMA'S JOY, FOR TODAY, WILMA IS TO BE MARRIED...

TUM-TA-TUM-TRAP-THE-CRASH  
CLOTHES, REHEARS. WHAT IS IT?

MR. ROXBELL IS HERE, MISS WILMA...



Wilma is like a CHILD again as she flings about her bedroom singing happily... The child I know who used to steal up to the attic when we were both so young and peer inside me and finger the old lace and cloth that had been stored in me and forgotten...

CARLY OH... HE'S  
EARLY! I'M NOT  
EVEN READY! SHOW  
ME MY LEAVES...

YES,  
MAM...



AND I LOVED HER. EVEN AFTER SHE'D GROWN AND NO LONGER CAME TO ME AND SEARCHED MY CONTENTS AND TRIED ON MY BRAIDS AND DRESSES AND SCARFS, I LOVED HER. EVEN WHEN ALL I COULD DO WAS LIE THERE AND LISTEN TO HER... BELOW... LISTEN TO HER FOOTSTEPS GROW HEAVY WITH THE FEARS, AND HER MOTHER'S AND FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS DIS-APPEAR WITH THEIR DEATHS...

I'VE CALLED THE JUSTICE OF THE PEACE AND HE'S WAITING FOR US. THE RESERVATIONS AT THE HOTEL ARE SET...



JUST ONE THING, THOUGH... ONE THING THAT BOthers me... ONE THING THAT SPOILS THE JOY I FEEL. THIS MAN... THIS CARL JESSELL... THIS MAN WHO EVEN NOW AM DUBIOUS STUFFS THE LAST REMAINTERS OF WILMA'S NEWLY PURCHASED TROUSSEAU INTO HIS BAG...

ARE YOU READY TO GO, WILMA?

YES, I AM AN OLD WOMAN. I WAS WITH WILMA'S PARENTS ON THEIR HONEYMOON I WAS AGE, THEN, AND I CARRIED THEIR BELONGINGS WHEN THEY MOVED AWAY... TO THIS HOUSE AND THEN I WAS PUT AWAY, UP THERE, WHERE ALL I COULD DO WAS SIT AND LISTEN AND SING OLD...

CARLY, CARLY... WILMA, MY PET...



I HEARD SOFT THINGS WHILE I LAY THERE BATHING OUT IN MY AT THE GRAVE. I HEARD THE LITTLE CRY OF THE NEW-BORN INFANT NAMED WILMA. I HEARD HER CHILDISH VOICE AS SHE SCAMPERED ABOUT DOWNSTAIRS. AND I SAW HER WHEN SHE CAME TO ME AND PLAYED WITH ME AND LAUGHED SOFTLY...

ALMOST PAKED  
WILMA, DEAR?  
ALMOST  
GONE...



AND I FELT HER YOUTH PASS AS SHE FELT IT PASS, AND I PRAYED AS SHE PRAYED... THAT SHE WAS NOT GLASSHEEN TO A... LIFE OF LONGEVITY... THAT SHE WOULD SEE SOMEONE AND HE WOULD ASK HER TO BE HIS WIFE. AND NOW OUR PRAYERS, WILMA'S AND MINE, HAS COME TRUE...

HERE... LET ME... YOU GO  
GET READY I'LL FINISH  
UP...

OH, DEAR... I HOPE  
I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN  
ANYTHING...



I FEEL HIS SOOTHING HANDS UPON MY LIP, SLAMMING IT DOWN, AND I SWOON... NOT WITH PAIN, NOT FROM THE MOUSE... I SWOON WITH FEAR. THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT THIS MAN... SOMETHING... TEAFOOTING...

LET'S GO,  
THEN...

YOU HAD,  
HADN'T?

CARRY MY  
TRUNKS OUT TO  
THE CAR, JESSELL!



NOW JEEVES IS COMING FORWARD  
ME AND I FEEL MYSELF BEING LIFTED  
AND CARRIED...



AND SUDDENLY I FEEL THE WARM  
BREATH UPON ME FOR THE FIRST TIME  
IN THIRTY-NINE YEARS...



AS AN CAR DOORS SLAM AND THE  
MOTOR ROARS, I FEEL HAPPY, MY  
FEARS FORGOTTEN...



I SIT DONTIFULLY, FEELING OF THE SILK AND LACE  
AND PLUSHY THINGS INSIDE ME AND THE WIND UPON  
ME AS WE SPEED SOUTH... WILMA, AND I, AND THE  
MAN...



AND THEN WE STOP AND WILMA AND CARL LEAP FROM  
THE CAR AND HURRY, BIBBLEDING UP A FLOWERING Walk;  
AND I SEE THE SIGN AND HEAR THE WELCOMING  
VOICE OF THE JUSTICE OF THE PEACE



I WAIT, DREAMING, AND AFTER A WHILE WILMA AND CARL  
COME OUT, AND THERE IS A BAND OF GOLD ON WILMA'S  
THIRD FINGER OF HER LEFT HAND AND I KNOW THAT SHE  
AND THE MAN ARE HUSBAND AND WIFE...



AND SO IT IS EVENING, AND THE SKY GROWS DARK.  
WE PULL OFF THE HIGHWAY INTO A ROAD LEADING  
TO A YEW-COVERED HOTEL... WILMA AND CARL'S  
HOBBYWORLD HOTEL...



STRANGE HANDS PULL ME FROM THE CAR, CARRY ME ACROSS THE HOTEL Lobby, AND DROP ME TO THE FLOOR BEFORE THE ELEVATOR, AND I LISTEN TO THE SCRATCHING OF THE PER AS CARL REACTIVATES.

MR. AND MRS. CARL...  
FIREWELL, LOOKS GOOD,  
ER, MONEY?

IT LOOKS WONDERFUL,  
GARLING...



NOW WE ARE ALONE... WILMA AND I AND CARL... ALONE IN THIS HOTEL SUITE... AND SUDDENLY THAT FEAR IS BACK AGAIN, THAT FEAR OF THIS MAN WHO HAD TAKEN UP WITH ALL HIS MONEY!

FIREWELL, CARL...

MERRY...



WILMA'S NERVOUS FINGERS LIFT MY LID AND SHE PUMPS THROUGH ME, LIFTING OUT HER PRETTIEST GOWN. FOR THIS IS THE NIGHT WE'VE BOTH DREAMED OF... WILMA'S PEDDING NIGHT...

WILMA? YES, CARL? WHAT... BABY...



CARL STANDS BEFORE WILMA, THE  
BLAZING AXE THAT HE'S JUST  
TAKEN FROM HIS BAR IN HIS HAND.  
CARL! THAT'S... I'M GOING TO  
KILL YOU, WILMA...



CARL! YOU'RE  
JOKEIN'!  
YOU'RE A FOOL,  
WILMA! DID YOU  
REALIZE THERE'S  
COULD LEAVE YOU?  
BIG FOOT, YOU'RE  
ALMOST FONTE I'M  
THREETY-JEWELED IT  
WASN'T POSS, WILMA!  
IT WAS YOUR MONEY.



I PLANNED ALL THIS, WILMA. PLANNED IT CAREFULLY. YOU'RE GOING TO GET SOCKED, BE CONFINED TO YOUR ROOM, AND ALL THE WHILE, I'LL BE  
GETTING RID OF YOUR BODY, PIECE BY PIECE. AND WHEN IT'S ALL BEEN DISPOSED OF, I'M BORN  
TO SAY YOU BAN AREA... THAT WHEN I BOUGHT UP YOU  
WERE GONE, AND THE POLICE WILL LOOK FOR YOU,  
AND THEY WON'T FIND YOU... AND YOUR MONEY  
WILL BE MINE...



THE AXE BLAZES CUTS WILMA'S SKIN FOR HELP  
SHOT AS CARL BRINGS IT DOWN UPON HER BLANCHED  
FACE...

NO, CARL! NO!  
YAAH...

WER, WILMA



I AM EMPTY NOW. CARL HAS STRIPPED ME OF MY  
CONTENTS...THE HORROR-PURPOSED LINERHELD. THE  
DRESSES. I LIE BEHIND THE BATH-  
ROOM DOOR, MY EYES WIDE, WAITING...LISTENING IN  
HORROR AS CARL DISMEMBERS WILMA'S BODY WHERE  
HE'S CARRIED IT...IN THE TUB.

EH, EH, EH...



I RECOIL AS THE DISMEMBERED  
SECTION OF WILMA'S ONE-PIECE  
BODY DROPS INFRONT OF ME AND I FEEL  
THE SOFTNESS AND THE PLIUS THAT  
FLOWS FROM IT. I SLAM MY EYES  
DOWN IN FRIGHT AND LOATHING AND...



NOW CARL HAS JAMMED A STICK INTO MY MOUTH...  
FORCING MY EYES TO STAY OPEN...PREVENTING ME FROM  
BURNING HIM...BUT THERE ARE OTHER WAYS. I WILL  
WAIT. HE WILL BE WITH WILMA'S DISMEMBERED CHAINS  
AND I ENTHRAL THEM LOVINGLY...

THERE'S NO WAY TO  
SHUT HIM DOWN.  
AND CLEAN UP THE  
PLACE.



THERE IS A BADNESS IN ME SOMEWHERE...DEEP IN THE  
WOODPARKS, IN THE METAL REINFORCEMENTS, IN THE  
LEATHERETTE THAT COVERS ME...THERE IS A CYCLOPS,  
AND A BADNESS AND AN ANGER. I FEARED THIS MAN. I  
FEARED FOR WILMA. NOW SHE LIES DEAD, BEING REIN  
ABUSED BY THIS MAD MANIAC. SUDDENLY, I DESPISE  
HIM...DESPITE HIM WITH EVERY BONE AND TISSUE IN MY  
BODY...

INTO THE TRUNK YOU GO.



AND SUDDENLY, AND MY BADNESS,  
THERE IS BLEED. I HAVE HURT THIS  
MANIAC WHO HAS TAKEN MY LOVED  
ONE FROM ME. I CAN HURT HIM  
AGAIN...



ANOTHER PART OF WILMA IS TOSSED  
WITHIN ME AND AGAIN I SLAM MY  
EYES SHUT UPON HIS DISMEMBERED  
PAL...



I LIE LOCKED, WAITING...THE SILENCE GIVES INSIDE ME  
I LISTEN AS CARL PHONES DOWN TO THE DEER...

MY WIFE DON'T TALK WELL. I  
WONDER IF YOU COULD SERVE OUR  
MEALS IN OUR ROOM. SHE WANTS  
TO RESTAIN IN BED. AND...OH...  
PLEASE LEAVE WORD WITH THE  
CDA WEAVERMAN THAT WE ARE  
NOT TO BE DISTURBED.



CARL IS SLEEVING... PERRY SLEEVES. HE HAS TAKEN PILLOWS AND LAID THEM HEAVILY UPON THE BED AND COVERED THEM WITH BLANKETS SO THAT IT APPEARS AS IF MELISSA LIES THERE.

YOUR SONNER,  
MR. POWELL...

OH, THANK YOU SIR,  
MRS. POWELL IS  
ASLEEP IN THERE...



AND EVERY SO OFTEN, HE COMES TO ME AND UNLOCKS ME AND REMOVES A DISINTERRED SECTION OF WILMA'S BODY AND WRAPS IT CAREFULLY IN THE PAPER HE'S BROUGHT FOR THE PURPOSE, AND GOES OUT FOR A "WALK".



AND NO ONE SUSPECTS THE FOLDS  
ONLY I KNOW THE TRULY TRUTH.  
THE DAYS PASS, THE PARTS INCREASE.  
WE ARE SLOWLY DISAPPEARING,  
AND I KNOW DESPERATELY, I MUST  
THINK OF THIS THING, EXPOSE HIM

BUH... TIME FOR ANOTHER  
WALK. I'LL... I'LL...  
WHAT THAT...

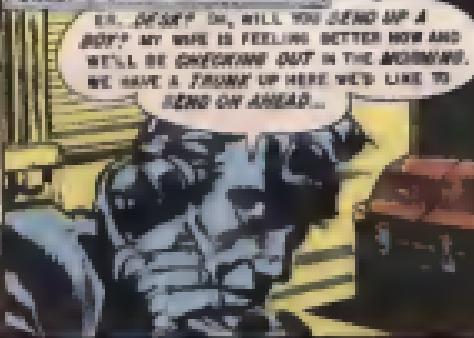


CARL STRUGGLES WITH THE LOCK BUT I HAVE JACKETED  
IT WELL. HE QUARTERS AWOOD ME...

OPEN, BLAST  
YOU...



BUT MY LOCK HOLDS FAST, AND HOW CAN I  
BE DESPERATE. THIS WILL CALL FOR A CHANGE OF  
PLANS. I LISTEN AS HE PHONES...



THE BILLBOB ARRIVES WITH HIS DOLLY, AND I FEEL  
MYSELF LIFTED AND FEEL WILMA'S DRIED AND RIGID  
REMAINS SITTING WITHIN ME.

TAKE IT DOWN TO THE EXPRESS  
OFFICE, BOB. WHERE'S THE ADDRESS?  
IT GOES TO...

TEE, SIR.



AND NOW I AM SLOWLY WHEELS OUT OF THE ELEVATOR - ACROSS THE CROWDED LOBBY. THIS IS WHAT I PLANNED. THIS IS WHAT WILL EXPOSE MY LOVE  
DESI'S MURDERER. I SHAP OPEN MY LOCK... EVEN WHEN  
MY WIFE...



THE LOBBY OF THIS PLACID HONEYMOON HOTEL  
REVERBERATES WITH SCREAMS AS I SPILL FORTH MY  
BLOOD-STAINED BODY CONTENTS UPON THE FLUSHLY  
CARPETED FLOOR.



AND NOW IT IS FOUR YEARS LATER.  
ONE MORE I LIE IN DARKNESS  
GATHERING DUST...



I LIE IN A WAREHOUSE WHERE THE  
POLICE HAVE STOROKE ME UNTIL  
THEY CAN CATCH CARL, AND BRING  
HIM TO TRIAL AND PUT ME UP AS  
'EXHIBIT A'.



I LIE THROUGH THE YEARS AND I  
WAIT. BUT NO ONE COMES FOR ME.  
NO ONE COMES TO TAKE ME OUT INTO  
THE SUNLIGHT, AND I GROW ANGRY  
AND HUNGRY FOR REVENGE... HERE  
AND WILM'S REVENGE...



VOICES. VOICES IN THE DARKNESS. WHO ARE VOICE  
IS FAMILIAR. TWO SHADOWS WITH BLAZING FLASH-  
LIGHTS MOVE TOWARD ME WHERE I LIE AMONG WAR-  
HOLES OF MINI COATS AND BOXES OF STOLEN  
ARTICLES THAT THE POLICE HAVEN'T RECOVERED AND  
ARE HOLDING FOR THEIR CLAIMANTS...



AND UP ABOVE, CARL HEARS THE SCREAMS AND KNOWS  
THAT THE TRUTH IS OUT. THAT HIS HORRIBLE DOGS  
HAS BEEN DISCOVERED, AND HE MAKES HIS EXIT...



THAT NAME. THAT VOICE. FOR FOUR YEARS I HAVE  
WAITED, STILL FEELING WILM'S BODY REMAINS WITH  
ME. STILL HATING. STILL PRAYING FOR REVENGE.  
AND NOW, CARL ROSWELL IS HERE. BESIDE ME. I  
SHRIEK...



THE BOXES PILED UPON ME TUMBLE WITH A CLATTER TO THE FLOOR. SOMEWHERE A VOICE CALLS OUT...

WHO'S THERE???

HIDE...QUICK!!

I FEEL ROUGH HANDS UPON MY LID. FAMILIAR ROUGH HANDS...CARL'S HANDS. HE SWINGS ME OPEN, STEPS INTO ME, AND I SWALLOW HIM GREEDILY...



HE BRINGS THE LID DOWN. DRINKING SILENTLY. INSIDE ME, LISTENING. KARMA MUST HAVE BEEN A BIT...



THE FOOTSTEPS DISAPPEAR. CARL TRIES TO OPEN THE LID, BUT I HAVE HIM NOW. I WON'T LET HIM GO. I AM MY OWN...LISTENING TO HIM STRUGGLE.

CHOKER...I'M SUFFOCATING IN HERE. WILLY, SET ME OUT. QUICK!



BUT WILLY DOESN'T ANSWER. WILLY HAS RUN OFF, LEAVING CARL TO HIS FATE. CARL SNAPS. THE AIR STOPS TRAIL. FINALLY, IN DESPAIR, HE PULLS HIS LIP OUT, PIERCING IT THROUGH MY SKIN...

HASP. NEED ANY. HASP. BETTER TO CHOKER. CHANCE BEING CAUGHT THAN...



AND NOW I TAKE MY REVENGE. I BREATH DEEP AND THEN EXHALE. I EXHALE ALL OF THE HATE AND LOATHING AND DESIRE FOR REVENGE WITHIN ME. AND I SLOWLY, MY EYES CLOSE DOWN AND MY JAW SQUEEZES DOWN AND I GROW SMALL. AND CARL SCREAMS UNTIL HE CANNOT SCREAM ANY MORE AND HIS FLESH QUILTS FROM THE BANAL MOTES LIKE HONEY FROM A BABY'S DECORATIVE BAG. AND WHEN THEY COME, THEY FIND ME... A TINY BOX WITH A HOLE OF COMPRESSED BONE INIDE ME AND A THOUSAND TACOS OF FLESH-RIBBON AROUND ME...

CHOKER...



HONK, HONK. YEP, KIDNEY. WILLY'S OLD TRUNK SHUT CARL UP ALL NIGHT. ANYBODY CARE FOR A FOOT SQUARE BONE CHASE? IF YOU COULD FIND A HOLE FOR IT, YOU COULD MAKE 'EM WITH SPOTS AND HAVE A ADZE OF A CRAP GAME. NOT JEFF GRAY. I'LL USE IT AS A PAPER-WEIGHT TO HOLD DOWN MY NEXT YARN TILL WE MEET AGAIN LATER ON IN MY BRAVE LAND. RIGHT NOW, THE RABBIT HOPPER ARRIVED WITH JEFF OFFERING. I'LL BE SHOVELING OFF TILL WE PEAK AGAIN 'BYE'



# THE VAULT OF HORROR!®

MEET THE GREEPY-GEEZY TEAM SCREAM-STORM-PELLEP = THE VAULT OF HORROR, THE GREEPY-KEEPER, READY TO ENTERTAIN YOU WITH ONE OF MY GREEPY COLLECTOR'S ITEMS, FOR MY SPOT IN G.R.E.E.P. I'M... I HAVE CHASED A DAY DAZE OF MARCH MAD HORRORITY ENTITLED...

## ...ONLY SKIN DEEP!

HERBERT HAD MADE UP HIS MIND. THIS WOULD BE THE LAST TIME HE WOULD GO TO NEW ORLEANS FOR MARCH MADNESS AND SIT IN THIS CROOKED CAFE... WHERE HE FIRST MET SUZANNE... AND WAIT FOR HER. THIS WOULD BE THE LAST LONGEST YEAR HE'D SPEND, DREAMING THROUGH THE SPRING AND SUMMER AND FALL UNTIL FINALLY ROLLED AROUND AGAIN AND HAD TO PUSH SOUTH FOR ONE HEAVENLY WEEK. YEP, IT'LL BEADY WAS LONG ENOUGH. THIS TIME HE WOULD ASK SUZANNE TO MARRY HIM. HE SAT SILENTLY, HAVING HIS DRINK, SEARCHING THE MASKED, COSTUMED THINGS FOR SUZANNE'S FAMILAR FIGURE. AND THEN SHE WAS COMING TOWARD HIM, OUT OF THE HELLISH AND MADNESS...

SUZANNE... DARLING...

HERBERT...



AND NOW THEY WERE IN EACH OTHER'S ARMS, AND HE WAS HOLDING HER GLOBE AND FEELING HER WOMANLY WARMTH AND HIS TEAR-LONG DREAM WAS A REALITY ONCE MORE...

SUZANNE. SUZANNE. I THOUGHT I OWE HERBT A YEAR ABOUT YOU EVERY DAY. EVERY MINUTE IS SUCH A LONG TIME. MINUTE I WISHED YOU SO... NOWIVE YOU BEER...



HERBERT STARED INTO SUZANNE'S EYES...DANCING EYES, THAT SMILED AT HIM FROM BEHIND THE RUBBER MASK SHE WORE. THE SAME MASK SHE'D WORN EVERY YEAR...THE MASK SHE'D WORN WHEN THEY'D FIRST MET, FIVE YEARS AGO...

BUT HOW I'VE BEEN  
SINCE LAST I'VE BEEN  
SOME CRAZY...THINK-  
ING ABOUT YOU. I WON'T  
LET YOU DO THIS TIME,  
BUT I WON'T LET YOU  
GO...EVER AGAIN

HUSH MY  
SWEET WE  
HAVE A  
WHOLE  
WONDER-  
FUL  
FUTURE  
AHEAD OF US...

I DON'T WANT A WED-  
DING. I WANT HERF  
HEAR...AND THE  
YEAR AFTER THAT...  
A WHOLE LIFE—  
LIVE TOGETHER!

DON'T  
TALK,  
HERBERT.  
DON'T SAY  
ANYTHING.  
NOW.  
DANCE  
WITH ME...

HERBERT FOLLOWED SUZANNE TO  
THE CROWDED DANCE FLOOR. BEHIND  
HER OWN MASK, HE COULD FEEL HIS  
FACE BURNING...THE PERTURBATION  
FLOWING. HE HELD HER CLOSE,  
KISSING...

LET'S GET OUT OF HERE. THERE'S  
ONE. LET'S GO THERE—  
PLACE WHERE IT'S  
QUIET...WHERE  
WE CAN TALK...

NOTHING  
TO TALK  
ABOUT,  
HERE.  
IS THERE...?

HE LOOKED AT HER...BLUTTING IT OUT...

I WANT TO ASK YOU TO  
MARRY ME, HER...

HERBIE...

THIS WASN'T THE WAY HERF PLANNED IT AT ALL. NOT  
HERE OR THE JAMMED DANCE FLOOR IN THIS HOT  
SMOKY CAFE. HERBERT HAD DREAMED OF A QUIET  
SPOT ALONG THE LAKE beneath MOSS-LADEN SPRUCE  
TREES...A ROMANTIC PLACE...TO PROPOSE. BUT NOW  
IT WAS OUT...AND DONE...

YOU...YOU REALLY WANT TO  
MARRY ME, HERBERT...WITH-  
OUT EVEN KNOWING WHAT I  
LOOK LIKE...?

I KNOW THAT I  
LOVE YOU, HER...  
AND THAT YOU LOVE  
ME. THAT'S WHAT'S  
IMPORTANT.

THEY'D STOPPED DANCING NOW, BUT AND HERBERT. THEY  
STOOD THERE, STARING INTO EACH OTHER'S EYES, ASTONISHED  
BY THE DAY ENDED...

ARE YOU SURE, HERBIE, DEAR?  
SUPPOSE, BEHIND THIS MASK,  
I WAS NOT AS TO U PICTURE ME.  
SUPPOSE I WAS...

YOU'LL NEVER  
BE ANYTHING  
BUT BEAUTIFUL  
TO ME, SURE, NO  
MATTER WHAT  
YOU LOOK LIKE.  
IT DOESN'T EVEN  
MATTER...

SHE TOOK HIS HAND...LED HIM FROM THE DANCE  
FLOOR...LED HIM THROUGH THE CROWD AND OUT OF  
THE CAFE INTO THE SCREAMING, PLESH-FILLED,  
HAIL-COUPLED STREET.

OH, HERBIE, I've  
WAITED FIVE YEARS  
FOR YOU TO SAY  
THAT...

WE'VE WAITED SO MUCH  
TIME, MY SWEET. I'VE  
WANTED TO SAY IT FOR  
FIVE YEARS...



AND NOW THE MISTS AND THE BOSS AND THE MERRYMAKING WERE FAR BEHIND. OVERHEAD, STARS PEERED THROUGH BONITO CYPRESSSES, AND THE LAKE WAS A MIRROR OF BLACK.

MARRY ME...  
BUT I LOVE  
YOU...  
ASK ME AGAIN...

SHE CAME INTO HIS ARMS AND HE COULD SEE THAT HER EYES WERE FILLING WITH TEARS.

FEE, DARLING. I'LL  
MARRY YOU... BLAFLY...

SAY! SWEETIE! LET  
ME KISS YOU...

HE REACHED FOR HER MASK... TO  
LIFT IT AWAY... SO HE COULD TOUCH  
HER LIPS WITH HIS. SHE CAUGHT  
HIS HAND.

NO, HONEY!  
DON'T YOU  
HONEY. I JUST  
WANT TO  
KISS YOU...

MARRY ME  
FIRST, HERBIE.  
THEN WE CAN  
UNMASK... WHEN  
WE MAKE OUR  
LOVE COMPLETE.

HOW'S  
TOMORROW?

WE COULD RENT A CAR...  
DRIVE UPSTATE. WE  
COULD FIND A JUSTICE  
OF THE PEACE...

LET'S  
GO...



THEY RAN, HAND IN HAND... LIKE CHILDREN. AND SOON NEW ORLEANS WAS JUST A BYE-BYE TO THE BOAT, AND THEY WERE NUMBERED UP THERE IN A MINTED CAR... LIKE THIS PHANTOM...

THERE, DARLING! THERE'S  
A BOAT...

MR. MOORE, JUSTICE  
OF THE PEACE, MAR-  
RIAGED PERFORMANCE, NO  
PAINTING. THIS IS IT!

THE OLD J.P. PERFORMED THE CEREMONY WITH RAISED  
STICKERS. THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME HE'D EVER  
MARRIED A COUPLE WHOSE FACES HE DID NOT SEE, BUT  
THEN, IT WAS MARRY YOURSELF...



LATER... THE SMALL HOTEL... THE SWINGING BELL... BOY CARRYING THEIR HASTILY PACKED BAGS... LEAVING THE HOTEL CROSSES TO THEIR ROOM...

UP FROM NEW ORLEANS... YES... WE WERE JUST MARRIED...



AND NOW, ALONE AT LAST, THE Sudden Embarrassment OF THE INTIMATE MOMENT...

WELL, DEAR, DON'T YOU THINK IT'S TIME TO GET A LOOK AT YOUR NEW HUSBAND... AND I...

WAH, HERRIE AND HER FIRST...



HE WATCHED, HIS HEART BEATING LIKE A TRIP-HAMMER IN HIS CHEST, AS HE REACHED FOR THE LIGHT, PLACING IT ON...

HE COULD SEE HER IN THE DIM HALF-LIGHT FROM THE MOON SHINING OUTSIDE... SILHOUETTED... MOVING LITTLE... LINGERING...

AND THEN SHE WAS COMING TOWARD HIM AND HE COULD HEAR HER BREATHING... THE SHORT GASPS... EXCITED... PASSIONATE...



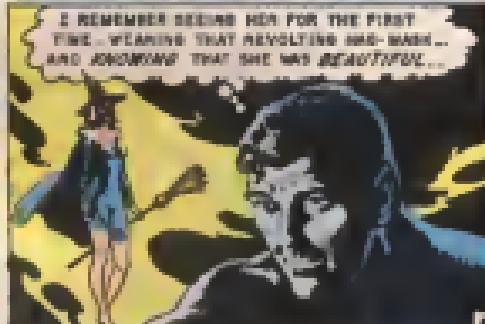
LATER... LYING IN THE DARKNESS BEIDE HER, SMOKING A CIGARETTE... HERRIE SMILED...

YOU KNOW, DARLING? I NEVER DID GET TO SEE YOUR FACE...

I KNOW THAT...



HER BREATHING BECAME HEAVIER... REGULAR. SHE WAS ASLEEP. HERBS LAY THERE AWAKE, SMOKING, THE CIGARETTE BURNED DOWN AND HE PUT IT OUT. HIS THOUGHTS DRIFTED BACK ACROSS FIVE YEARS... TO THE FIRST MARCH GRASS WEEK...



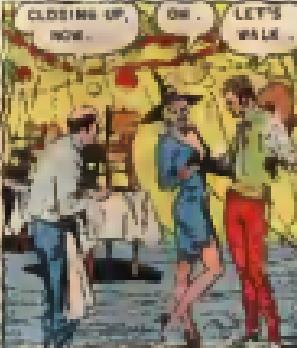
I REMEMBER SEEING HER FOR THE FIRST TIME... WEARING THAT REVOLTING RED DRESS... AND KNOWING THAT SHE WAS ATTRACTIVE...

YET, THE MASK HAD HIDEN HER FACE, BUT IT COULDN'T HIDE HER LOVELY VOICE, HER SMILING EYES AND HER TOUGH CERVICIOUS FIGURE MADE THE MASK SEEM SO OUT OF PLACE.

CAME TO DANCE... I LOVE TO...



HE REMEMBERED HOW THEY'D DANCED THAT FIRST NIGHT, NUMBER AFTER NUMBER, UNTIL THE CYPRESS HAD GONE AND THE MUSIC HAD ENDED.



AND HE REMEMBERED HOW THEY'D TALKED BY THE LAKE BENEATH THE CYPRESES AND WATCHED THE SUN COME UP...



HERBIE REMEMBERED HOW HE'D TRIED TO FORGET HER THAT FIRST TIME.

BUT IT'S SO EASY NOT TO! IT'S BETTER THAN EVER KNOWING WHAT YOU REALLY LOOK LIKE...

WHAT, HERBIE, YOU'LL REMEMBER ME AS YOU IMAGINE ME. FANTASY IS SOMETIMES MORE DESIRABLE THAN REALITY!



AND HE REMEMBERED HOW THEY'D VOWED TO MEET AGAIN THE FOLLOWING YEAR, IN THE SAME CAFE, AND HE'D DREAMED ABOUT HER TILL THEN...



FIVE YEARS, YEAR AFTER YEAR, MEETING AND DANCING AND TALKING AND FALLING IN LOVE... AND NOW SHE WAS HIS WIFE, AND HIS...



HERBIE REACHED FOR THE LAMP ABOVE THE BED. HE SHARPPED IT ON.





THERE WAS NO DIFFERENCE, THE FACE...THE  
MANT...THEY WERE THE SAME...

HERBIE SAT BOLT UPRIGHT IN THE DARKNESS...SAPPHI.  
HE WAS WIT AND CLAMMY AND RELIEVED...



HE SHAKED AT THE WOMAN SLEEPING BESIDE HIM. A  
COLD SHIVER OF FEAR RIPPLED UP HIS SPINE...

HE REACHED FOR THE LIGHT...NERVOUSLY...DREADFUL...



THE MASK... SHE'S STILL  
KEEPING HER BABY... JUST  
LIKE IN MY DREAM...

HERBIE STRUGGLED WITH THE  
STRING... PULLING IT... KNOTTING IT.

BLAST IT...

MWAH... HERBIE STOP...

SHE LOOKED UP AT HIM WITH TERROR  
IN HER EYES. HE CLAWED AT THE  
MASK...

DON'T PANIC! I  
DON'T TRY TO  
TAKE IT OFF!

IT'S TIME I  
SAW, BUT  
IT'S TIME!

HE WAS A WILD MAN NOW. HIS FINGERS DIGGING IN,  
TUGGING, PULLING... FRIGHTENED BY THE DREAM, HE  
DID NOT KNOW...

NO, HERBIE! I BEG  
OF YOU! YOU SAID  
IT DOESN'T MATTER.  
YOU SAID...

IT DOES  
MATTER... NOW...

THEN... SHE'S SCREAM OF PROTEST... BLOOD-CURDLING...  
HYSTERICAL... AND THE SAME COMING AWAY...

NO! NO! EEEEEEEEEE...

HOW WELL  
SHE...

A FINAL, DESPERATE, ANGRY PULL

HE HELD THE SOFT WET COVERING IN HIS HANDS, STARING DOWN AT HIS  
HER BLOOD FLOODED OUT OVER THE PILLOW. HER RAW FLESH QUAKED  
LIVELY. HER EYES BLAZED. HER BICKLY SPRINKLING MOUTH... HOW  
STRIPPED OF ITS FLESH LIFE... CRACKED OUT THE WORDS AS HIS  
STOMACH HEAVER...

I... BURGLE... NEVER... MORE... A MASK... I... CHOKED...

WATCH IT, HERBIE. THAT'S JOSE'S SKIN.  
YOU HAVE IN YOUR HANDS. DON'T FLING  
IT FROM YOU LIKE THAT! THE BABY  
LOSES FACE! WELL, KNIVES... THAT'S  
MY CONTRIBUTION TO THE GRATEFUL  
KEEPER'S MASK FOR THIS TIME. I'LL

SEE YOU NEXT IN MY MASK, THE  
FABLE OF HORROR. BUT BEFORE I  
TURN YOU BACK TO C. E., SOME BOUND  
ADVICE. DON'T TRY  
TO REMOVE A DAME'S  
MASK AT BURNER TILL  
YOU LEAVE SHE'S  
WEARING ONE, OR  
YOU MAY BE STORMED  
WITH THE CHEER.



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MAGAZINES! LOOK FOR...

FANTASY

# WEIRD SCIENCE



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WEIRD SCIENCE • WEIRD FANTASY  
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WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY

TWO-FISTED ANNUAL • TALES OF TERROR



## BIG FISH!

As he poised on the edge of the lake, Stan Albert chuckled aloud. This Mr. Karin was a real smart Joe. He realized that a small expenditure can often bring fabulous returns if you're not wishy-washy about using methods that are slightly illegal. His offer to Stan was a good example of a shrewd operator skirting with ethics in order to win a potful of money. Stan tensed and his bronzed body arched in a neat dive; hardly a ripple signaled his entry into the water. With powerful strokes he slid quickly under the surface, to the spot where Karin and the dope Foster were fishing from their rowboats. All he had to do for the \$500, Stanley reflected as he surged forward underwater, was detach the bait from Foster's fishing line, so that Karin could land a bigger catch. There was \$5,000 riding on the contest . . . the man to bring in the larger fish would pocket as much as Stan ordinarily made in a year! Smart of Karin to offer half-a-grand just to make the bet less of a gamble for himself! The easiest dough Stan Albert had ever made!

In the greenish water Stan saw Foster's hook; with a powerful surge Stan slipped through the depths toward the object of his quest with Karin. \$500 bucks, Stanley thought as he reached out and steadied Foster's bobbing line . . . just to help a man win a contest! A small fortune to make certain that the right man brought in a bigger fish than his opponent!

Carefully, his fingers moving with

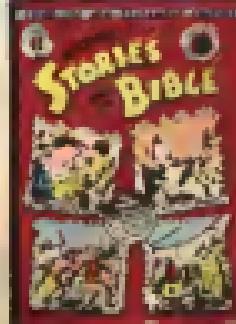
great delicacy, Stan began to slide the bait free. This guy Foster was a chisel, too, Stan grinned. His hook was bigger than had been agreed on; this was a battle between two unscrupulous operators. And he stood to profit from the contest!

Now the bait was almost off the hook, and Stan felt his chest tightening as his lungs clamored for fresh air. The bait was caught on the bent part of the hook and Stan gave a tug to wrench it free. Another 30 seconds was all he could endure without coming to the surface . . . he'd have to throw discretion to the winds and pull the hook good and hard!

Suddenly the line became taut under his fingers and Stan felt the hook slithering free. With surprise he was aware of the glittering metal moving upward. Then a ripping sensation at his throat sent a spasm of pain stabbing through his body. The big hook had become cruelly imbedded in Stan's throat and was tearing the tender skin open with each passing second. Already the water was becoming discolored with the reddish fluid pouring from his gaping wound!

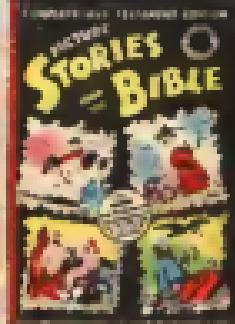
Stan felt himself growing faint as he struggled futilely to escape the torturous hook, and as the life drained swiftly from his writhing body he was dimly aware that he was being lifted laboriously toward the surface. All around him the water had become a swirling mass of blood . . . his fingers were losing all feeling . . . the taste in his mouth was hot, acid, gagging.

In his last moment, before darkness closed in and blotted out Stan Albert's shuddering agony, he knew that Foster . . . working frantically to pull in his line . . . had caught himself a really big fish!



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# THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Hab. hab. I've seen that our Horor Hi! Parade has evolved quite a bit since you keepin' tabs! Here are the latest additions to our collection, courtesy of Nelson Brillwell of Oklahoma City, Okla., Miles Hughes of Memphis, Tenn., Dick Bremser of Glendale, Wash., Parish McFerran of Commack, N.Y., Edward Peeler of Brooklyn, N.Y., Robert Rosen of Staten Island, N.Y., Dan Roman of Massapequa, N.Y., Roger Rodger of Freeport Falls, Wisc., Jim Ryland of Brooklyn, N.Y., and Lynn Weber of Woodcliff Lake, N.J.

OKLAHOMA CIDE  
BEE-BARREL POLEA  
A-ROUND THE CORONER  
AMIE CORY  
SLAUGHTER BOY  
I LOATHE YOU CRUELLY  
SUNG-ROUSE BLUES  
THE TENNESSEE VAULTS  
SOMEBODY BOILED MY PAL  
HOWIE YOU GONNA KEEP 'EM DOWN ON THE FARM (AFTER THAT VE READ EC!)  
BETTY NO HEAD  
WHEN JOHNNY COMES MARCHING HOME AGAIN, (HORROR HORROR)  
I GOT HER SON IN THE MORNING, IT TOOK SCARE THAT NIGHT!  
SEVERED HEADS AMONG THE GHOULES WHO MUNCH'D ON THAT BODY IN THE COFFIN, I CHOKED CREEPIN'  
IT THE ONE WITH THE PUTRIDIFIED VEIL!!  
WISH YOU WERE WOLF  
OLD CROAKS AT HOME  
CHOKE ME, DRILL ME, SCRATCH ME

And while we're on a musical note, here are some R&B letters from some of you cats:

Dear Crypt,  
Do this, man! I think your comic books are real gone.

J. Forman  
Newark, N.J.

I'd walk a mile for your map... it's real cool!  
Judy Alberado  
Chicago, Ill.

Man! That one-in-a-way cool story, "The Knobler," by Roy Bradbury, in the last issue of "Tales From The Crypt," was real cool!  
Ragster Jim Meagan  
Richardson, N.Y.

F.B.I. Dig that one-in-a-way understate!

I want to congratulate you and your "new initiates" for having cut such super-George maps!

I'd love to start an EC fan club. Anyone interested can write to:

Lynn Weber  
Woodcliff Lake, N.J.

Anyone interested can write to US, Lynn! Top... my short editor here informed me that, due to the huge quantity of requests from the EC organization, is contemplating starting some sort of fan club. The best minds (?) are now busy at work contemplating further developments will be forthcoming when the contemplations have been completed. But don't worry... it'll come sooner! See THE VAULT OF HORROR No. 23 for the next exciting episode in the latest map-making effort!

Dear Crypt Keeper,

If someone doesn't have enough money to buy EC, then he's probably too stupid to understand the artwork.

Bob West  
Oklahoma City, Okla.

I can't help thinking how much Shakespeare caused by not reading or writing stories like yours. They're superb!

Ronald Fugate  
Dayton, Ohio

How in the heck could a human live in the same apartment with a corpse for almost two months? I'm referring to "Curiosity Killed" ... in EC, by M. Woodstock ... well ... his! of course! Certainly, when Mrs. Clayton called upon Mr. Duskin, and he opened the door wide open, wouldn't she have smelled the smell from the smell? If not, please explain.

Jack Lowe  
San Antonio, Texas

Ghooophy!

Dear C.K.,

You have forgotten an important character in horror literature ... the GHOUL! Why not try to get a GHOULish story in your books?

Danny Barnes  
Anderson, Pa.

We may always see worse than you think, Danny.

In closing, the usual commercial announcement: The third annual TALES OF TERROR, EC's handbag anthology, 120 pages of odds 171, sixteen complete stories, over covering 4 hours, reprinted from 1952, is now available for \$1.00. Your name and your address (please print) to any EC map will entitle you the reduced price of 75¢. So if a dollar is a dollar, half a dollar... guess EC has got? They're still contemplating! Address where you send for all this above... or where YOU send us dollar... ha!

The Crypt Keeper  
Room 706, Dept. 29  
225 Lafayette St.  
N.Y.C. 13, N.Y.

**ERNIE VISITED THE DOCTOR  
BUT NEVER EXPECTED THE**

# **LAST LAUGH**



ERNIE SIT TOO UNCOMFORTABLY ON THE LEATHER CHAIR IN THE DOCTOR'S WAITING ROOM. FROM TIME TO TIME, THE EXPRESSION ON HIS LOOSE FLABBY-FEATURED FACE WOULD CHANGE FROM ONE OF ANXIETY TO THAT OF A CHEERFUL GRIN, AND HE WOULD CHUCKLE SILENTLY OR LAUGH OUT LOUD. WHEN THAT HAPPENED, HE WOULD CLUTCH HIS STOMACH AND THE SMILE WOULD FADE AND THE ANXIETY WOULD RETURN ONCE MORE. HE SHOOK HIS HEAD SADLY AFTER HIS MOST RECENT OUTBURST OF HILARITY AND LOOKED UP WITH RELIEF AS DOCTOR FALDER ENTERED.

"I'M SORRY I KEPT YOU WAITING, SIR, BUT I'VE BEEN HAVING PERSONAL DIFFICULTIES AT HOME. YOUR CALL BEING SO URGENT, WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE TROUBLE?"

"IT'S MY STOMACH, SIR! I NOT FAIRLY IT HURTS ME... HERE... EVERY TIME I LAUGH!"



DOCTOR FALDER PUFFED OUT OF HIS OVERCOAT

"ALL RIGHT! WE'LL TAKE A LOOK AT YOU, IF YOU'LL STOP THIS WAY, MR.—MR.— I'M AFRAID I DON'T CATCH THE NAME..."

"GEEZ, DOOF ERNIE GEEZ! I'M HERE 'ROUND THESE PARTS' BOTH IN TOWN ABOUT TWO WEEKS..."



THE DOCTOR LED MR. GEEZ INTO HIS EXAMINATION ROOM AND ROLLED UP HIS SLEEVES.

"RIGHT AS WELL GIVE YOU A THOROUGH GOING-OVER, MR. GEEZ. WHILE I'M EXAMINING YOU, YOU CAN FEEL ME ABOUT THIS PAIR YOUTH'E BEEN HAVING...

STARTED LAST WEEK. I MUSTA STRAINED MYSELF OR SOMETHIN'."



THE DOCTOR WENT OVER THE SINK AND BEGAN TO WASH HIS HANDS...

STRAINED YOURSELF, MR. GOLDETT. HON'T OH... IF YOU'LL PLEASE REMOVE YOUR SHIRT

SURE, DOCTOR. THAT'S WHAT I'VE HAPPENED FOR SEEING I GO FOR YARD...

DOC FALKER LOOKED AT ERNE QUIZITICALLY AS HE SEES HIS SCREWED UP HANDS...

SO FOR FAIR, MR. GOLDETT I DON'T UNDERSTAND

FAIR, DOCTOR LARGEST LARGE CHARTERED / I SET A BANG OUT OF JONES PRACTICAL JONES...

THE DOCTOR SLIPPED INTO HIS WHITE LAB COAT...

OH, I SEE! MY LAST WORK I NEARLY DIED LAUGHIN'. I PULLED THIS GAS, SEE AND I FRIEVE RESTRAINED MYSELF LAUGHIN' OVER IT.



ERNE STOOD BEFORE THE DOCTOR, STRIPPED TO THE WAIST... THE EXAMINING ROOM LIGHTS REFLECTING ON HIS CHUBBY BACK. DOC FALKER PLACED HIS STETHOSCOPE TO HIS BACK...

SO YEAH A PRACTICAL JOKER, EH, MR. GOLDETT WHAT SORT OF PRACTICAL JOKER?

AH, YOU KNOW, DOCTOR. STUFF LIKE I CALL UP A NUMBER AND OLD NUMBER SOME NIGHT...



AND I SAY...

THIS IS THE ELECTRIC COMPANY, MADAM. WE'RE CHECKING ON THE STREET LAMPS IN YOUR AREA. WOULD YOU KINDLY LOOK AND SEE IF THE STREET LAMP OUTSIDE YOUR HOUSE IS LIT?

OF COURSE. HOLD ON, PLEASE.



SO THE STREET LAMP, SEE. AND WHEN THEY COME BACK THEY SAY...

ERNE BEGAN TO LAUGH UNCONTROLLABLY...

THEY HEEH... THEY FALL FOR IT EVERY TIME, DOCTOR... HEEH, HEEH. THEY .OOOOH IT PANTS...

BREATHE DEEPLY AND HOLD IT...

SEE, THE STREET LAMP OUTSIDE MY HOUSE IS LIT.

WELL, BE SURE TO PUT IT OUT BEFORE YOU GO TO BED, HUH, HONEY? SEE



THE DOCTOR MOVED THE STETHOSCOPE ABOUT OVER MR. GELT'S CHEST, LISTENING SHAKILY.

"ALL RIGHT... EXHALE... SO ON, MR. GELT..."

"DR. I CALL UP A CANDY STORE."

"AM I SAY  
LUGGAGE CAN'T SWIM? YES,  
YOU BET PHILIP.  
MORFE IS A CARTON?"

"WELL, LET 'EM OUT, HUMP HIS LUGGAGE BETTER,  
COLD." *(Handwritten)*



THE DOCTOR PULLED AWAY HIS STETHOSCOPE AS ERNE LAUGHED HEARTILY AGAIN...

"STORY LIKE THAT. HOH, HEM!  
WHAT A BOSSY HEM, HEM! I  
OOOOOHHH..."

"AND LAST WEEK  
YOU SAY LAST  
WEEK YOU SEEMED  
TO STRAIN YOURSELF."

DOCTOR FALDER WRAPPED THE BLOOD-PRESSURE BAR  
AROUND ERNE'S ARM. ERNE ROGGED, SPINNING...

"DOOF LAST WEEK I PULLED  
THE GREATEST... THE HONEST...  
THE BEST FAR I EVER PULLED.  
I TELL YOL, I REALLY DID!"

*LAWWWWWH!*



ERNE STARTED TO CHUCKLE...

"I GET THIS IDEA, BECAUSE I NOTICE THAT THE KIDS IN THIS BORN ALL FLAT DOWN BY THE RAILROAD TRACKS. AND I NOTICE THAT THE LADY FEED SHOOTS THROUGH, BOY! ABOUT SEVENTY, EVERY DAY AT NOON.



"SO LAST WEEK, I BUY ME SOME BUNNIES OF HORSE-MEAT,  
REAL CHEAP STUFF. AND AN JEAN AN' ALBROOK AN' I  
BUY ME SOMETHING CLOTHES. AND I STUFF THE MEAT  
IN THE KIDS' CLOTHES AND I HO DOWN TO THE TRACKS  
ABOUT NOON AND I LAY THE MEAT ON THE TRACKS NEAR  
WHERE SOME KIDS IS PLAYIN'."



"A Y I WAIT, AND WHEN THE LIMITED SHOOTS BY, I SCREAM."



"HMM? WHAT'S BOBBY WAS DOING?"

"DOC, YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN THE FACES ON THOSE BOYS THEY TOOK ONE LOOK AT THE BOY WERE AND THEY STARTED RUNNING IN ALL DIRECTIONS!"

"HEH, HEH, HEH..."

"BOBBY! GEE! MAY!"



"ERNE CLUTCHED AT HIS STOMACH, SWINING AND WHEELING ALTERNATELY."

"HONEST, DOC. I NEARLY DIED LAUGHING. YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN THEIR FACES. SOON, THE WHOLE TOWN CAME OUT..."



"IT TOOK THEM MATTER THREE HOURS BEFORE THEY FOUND OUT IT WASN'T NO BIG GUN KILLED JONATHAN, AND AMBULANCE RUSHED AROUND LIKE CRAZY..."

"AND FOR LAUGHING..."



"WELL... WAIT HERE, MR. GEELY. I'LL BE A MOMENT..."



"DOC TALBOT LEFT ERNE ALONE IN THE EXAMINATION ROOM. AFTER A FEW MOMENTS, HE CAME BACK WITH FOUR CAPSULES IN ONE HAND AND A GLASS OF WATER IN THE OTHER..."

"HERE, MR. GEELY. SWALLOW THESE!"

"YOU KNOW WHAT'S WRONG, DOC? WILL I BE ALL RIGHT?"



"ERNE TOOK THE CAPSULES AND SWALLOWED THEM. HE WILL BE FINE, MR. GEELY. AND NOW, I WANT YOU TO GO OUT INTO THE WAITING ROOM AND SIT DOWN. I'LL CALL YOU WHEN I'M READY. I WANT TO PERFORM SOME TESTS ON YOU."

"SWEET, DOC. SURE!"



ERIK WENT OUT INTO THE WAITING ROOM AND SAT DOWN; HE COULD HEAR DOCTOR PALMER MOVING EQUIPMENT AROUND BEHIND THE CLOSED EXAMINATION ROOM DOOR...

"JUST RELAX, MR. OBEY. OKAY, OBEY. I'LL BE READY FOR YOU SHORTLY..."



FIFTEEN MINUTES WENT BY; ERIK BEGAN TO FEEL IMPATIENT. TWENTY MINUTES, ERIK FELT A PLENTY PIERCING PAIN IN HIS STOMACH. THIRTY MINUTES, FINALLY...

"I'M READING, DR. OBEY. WILL YOU COME IN SOON?"

"DOOF SONG - THAT'S WHAT IT'S MOUTH... EVEN WHEN I DON'T LAUGH, NOW..."



ERIK FOLLOWED THE DOCTOR INTO THE EXAMINATION ROOM. ONCE INSIDE...

"GET COMPLETELY UNDRESSED, MR. OBEY. BUT DON'T WORRY.. TAKE FOR YOUR OWNSELF AND WHILE YOU'RE DOING THAT, LISTEN TO WHAT I HAVE TO SAY..."

"OKAY, DOB. BUT DON'T WORRY.. TAKE FOR YOUR OWNSELF AND WHILE YOU'RE DOING THAT, LISTEN TO WHAT I HAVE TO SAY..."

"I DON'T CARE, MR. OBEY. I DON'T CARE..."



THE DOCTOR HAD TO WAIT, WATCHING ERIK SIT THERE, HE BEGAN TO TALK...

THERE WAS A FAMILY IN THIS TOWN, MR. OBEY! A MOTHER, A FATHER, AND TWO CHILDREN... BOY... OH, EVER... THE YOUNG ONE, THREE...

"CAN'T STAND KIDS, BOY, YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN THEIR FACES WHEN THEY SAW THAT BLOODY MESS..."



"ONE DAY THE MOTHER SENT HER TWO BOYS OUT TO PLAY. SHE TOLD THE EIGHT-YEAR-OLD TO WATCH THE THREE-YEAR-OLD AND KEEP HIM OUT OF DISASTER..."

"SEE THAT STEVEY DOESN'T GET HIMSELF DUNNY, ANYHOW..."

"TEH, NAME?"



"BUT THE EIGHT-YEAR-OLD WANDERED AWAY... LEFT THE THREE-YEAR-OLD DISREGARDED HIS MOTHER'S WISHES... AND THE THREE-YEAR-OLD GOT ALL BUSTY PLAYING WHERE HE SHOULDN'T HAVE!"

"OH, STEVEY! JUST LOOK AT YOU!"



"THE EIGHT-YEAR-OLD WENT TO PLAY WITH HIS FRIENDS... HE'D COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN ABOUT HIS LITTLE THREE-YEAR-OLD BROTHER UNTIL HE HEARD A BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAM..."



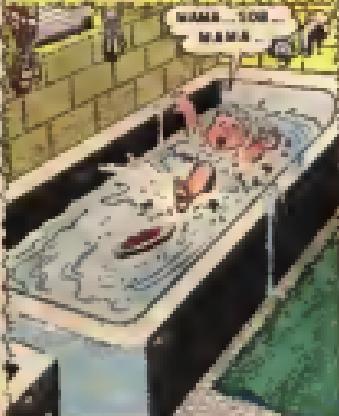
JEFFREY THOUGHT THAT THE BLOODY REMAINS LYING UPON THE RAILROAD TRACKS WAS HIS YOUNGER BROTHER, STEVEN! FEAR CLUTCHED AT HIS LITTLE EIGHT-YEAR-OLD HEART. HE STARTED RUNNING HOME WILLYA. HE NEVER SAW THE TRAIN.



THE MOTHER RUSHED OUT OF HER HOUSE WHEN SHE HEARD HER OLDER SON'S CRIES OF PAIN AND THE REVULSION ON THE TRUCK BRAKES.



IN HER FRIGHTENED ANXIETY, THE MOTHER'S THOUGHTLESSLY LEFT HER THREE-YEAR-OLD SON IN THE TUB WHERE SHATO HAD BATHED HIM.



ERNE STOOD, SHAKING, BEFORE THE DOCTOR, STAMMING AT HIS KNEE, FLAMING EYES.



DOCTOR FALDER'S GRIP WAS LIKE A VISE OF STEEL AS HE TIRED ERNE COOLLY TO THE EXAMINATION TABLE.

YOU SAY YOU ALMOST DIED LAUGHING WHEN YOUR PRACTICAL JOKE, MR. GELLY? WELL, NOW YOU WILL DIE LAUGHING! THOSE CAPULETS I GAVE YOU CONTAINED FISH HOOKS... NOT FISH HOOKS...



DOCTOR FALDER HOLLOWED OUT THE EQUIPMENT HE'D PREPARED AND SET IT ABOUT THE STRIPPED RECLINING FIGURE OF BOHEMIAN ERNE GELLY. THEN THE DOG TURNED ALL OF THE EQUIPMENT ON, AND THE FEATHERS THICKLED THE HAIR OF ERNE'S FEET AND WIGGED HIS BICEPS AND UNDER HIS ARMS AND BEHIND HIS EARS...



AND SO WE LEAVE ERNE GELLY WITH THE LITTLE FISH HOOKS IN HIS BOYISHING STOMACH, CHOKING TILL WELL THAT THE DOG WILL MAKE SURE ERNE GETS THE POINT OF THIS BARBED POINTIE! IN FACT, ERNE, THIS LAST ONE WILL KILL YOU AND ME, THE OLD BITCH WHATEVER WITH HER KETTLE OF FRAILY, SLEEPY, SOOTY, YEEH, WHOOPS ERNE JUST HAD HIS LAST BELLY LAUGHIN' REAL BIG-TICKLES. BOILED HIS EYE, HE DID!

# THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! AND NOW THAT YOUR APPETITES FOR HORROR HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENTLY PUNCHED BY MY FELLOW SLIME-SLURPERS... C.R. AND V.J., IT'S TIME FOR ME TO FEED YOU FOOL FACE. SO HOH INTO THE HAUNT OF FEAR, FENOM, AND YOUR MORTALS IN HEAVER, THE OLD WITCH WILL SPIN OUT THE DELIGHTFUL DELICIOUS INTO THE DELIRIOUS, CALLER...

## MOURNIN' MESS

THE CEMETERY LAY SILENT beneath a cold moon that slipped in and out from behind dark clouds that raced along on a bitter November wind. Below, the muffled sound of digging echoed into the night. A man stood knee-deep in an excavation among the flat, ugly-marked graves, anxiously沉着 his spade into the soft earth and tossing it onto a growing pile beside him. Every so often the man would stop his work, listen, and then, hearing nothing, continue digging...

I THOUGHT THERE WAS SOMETHING SCARY ABOUT THIS WHOLE SET-UP, RIGHT FROM THE BEGINNING, I TOLD IT. NOW I'M GOING TO FIND OUT... FOR SURE.



THE MAN FURIOUSLY SPADED THE BLACK LOAM OUT OF THE EYES-DEFENDING HOLE... ALL THE WHILE HUMMING TO HIMSELF...

"THE BRAVE ROBES' SOCIETY?" HMMPH! AN EXPERIENCED REPORTER LEARNS TO SENSE THESE THINGS. AND I SENSED IT. THAT FIRST DAY... AT THE PREM CONFERENCE IN THE MAYOR'S OFFICE.



"I REMEMBER HOW POMPOUS OUR  
BAYLOR WOULD STOOP BEFORE US AND  
WHEEZED OUT HIS ANNOUNCEMENT."

"GENTLEMEN! OUR FAIR CITY HAS  
LONG HAD THE PROBLEM OF ONE-  
FOOTING OF ITS DEBELIEVING AND  
HOMELESS DWELLERS WHO PASS  
AWAY WITH NO FRIENDS OR  
RELATIVES TO PROPERLY  
BURY THEM..."

"HERE TO FORE, THESE WRETCHED  
UNFORTUNATES HAVE BEEN LAIN  
TO REST IN OUR CITY IN POT-  
TER'S FIELDS MAINTAINED BY  
POOR TAXES. NOW, THIS BAD  
RESPONSIBILITY HAS BEEN TAKEN  
OUT OF YOUR CITY'S HANDS.  
GENTLEMEN..."

"MAY I PRESENT FELIX J. COPPE-  
HARD, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE  
GRATEFUL HOMELESS SOCIETY,  
WHO WILL TELL YOU OF THE  
WONDROUS OFFER HIS  
ORGANIZATION HAS MADE. THE  
OFFER I HAVE BRADDOURLY  
ACCEPTED!" MR. COPPEHARD...

"I REMEMBER SHUTTY-EYES MR. COPPEHARD... BURNING...  
SOFT WOMEN..."

"REMEMBER 'THE GRATEFUL HOMELESS OUTCASTS,  
AND UNWANTED' LYAFAYET SOCIETY. THE  
GRATEFUL HOMELESS SOCIETY FOR SHORT... WAS  
FORMED BY A GROUP OF SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS  
AND PROFESSIONAL MEN WHO FEEL THAT THEY  
OWED A DEBT OF GRATITUDE TO THIS FAIR CITY."

"ALL THE MEMBERS OF THIS ORGANIZATION CAME TO  
THIS CITY AS DOWN-AND-OUTERS, DRIFTERS, DER-  
ELICTS, OR JUST PLAIN BUMS. BUT HERE, THEY  
FOUND OPPORTUNITY. HERE, THEY FOUND FINAN-  
CIAL SUCCESS. AND SO, IN GRATITUDE... THEY  
HAVE BANDIED TOGETHER TO AID AND ENDS  
OTHERS LESS FORTUNATE THAN THEMSELVES.  
OTHER DRIFTERS AND UNWANTED, THEY HAVE  
PURCHASED A SMALL PARCEL OF LAND IN ONE  
OF OUR CITY'S SUBURBS, LANDSCAPED IT... AND  
HAVE TURNED IT INTO A CEMETERY..."

"...A BEAUTIFUL CEMETERY... WHERE THE POOR  
OUTCASTS WHO HAVE NOT BEEN AS FORTUNATE  
AS THEY MAY BE LAID TO FINAL REST IN  
ETERNITY WHEN THEY PASS FROM OUR  
MORTAL WORLD..."

"THE GRATEFUL HOMELESS"... WHO PREFER TO REMAIN  
UNKNOWN... HAVE CREATED AN ENDOWMENT FUND  
THROUGH MORTAL CONTRIBUTIONS, WITH WHICH ALL  
FUNERAL AND CEMETERY UPRIGHT EXPENSES WILL  
BE MET. NO LONGER WILL YOUR TAXES BE NEEDED FOR  
THIS PURPOSE. NO LONGER WILL SPROOT POTTER'S  
FIELDS MAR THE BEAUTY OF OUR FAIR CITY'S SUR-  
ROUNDINGS. COURTEOUSELY, NO LONGER WILL...



"YES, IT SMELLED FUNKY ALL RIGHT. I REMEMBER LISTENING TO MR. COOPER AND HE TALKED SO MUCH ABOUT THE WONDERFUL GROUP OF PHILANTHROPISTS HE REPRESENTED, AND I REMEMBER FINALLY ASKING—"

"MY QUESTION, MR. COOPER, WAS: I HAD TO ASK WHY SHOULD A GROUP OF HIGH-CLASS MEN SUDDEDLY BECOME SO CONCERNED ABOUT SOME DERELICTS' FUNERALS?"



"YES... THEY WERE ALL ONCE GOOD THEMSELVES, YOU EXPLAINED THAT, BUT YOU WAIT UNTIL THESE DERELICTS DIE BEFORE WE HELP THEM! COULDN'T THE MONEY BE PUT TO BETTER USE BY REHABILITATING THEM WHILE THEY ARE ALIVE?"



"THE GRATEFUL HOBOS ARE ALL SELF-MADE MEN, MR. COOPER. THEY RECEIVED NO HELP WHEN THEY WERE DOWN."

"THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE DERELICT IN OUR CITY COULD NOT CONCERN THESE MEN. LET THE DERELICT RISE UP AS THEY HAVE DONE. BUT WHEN THE DERELICT CAN NO LONGER RISE OR WHEN HE HAS PASSED ON, THEN LET HIM BE JARRED OF FINAL REST."

I STILL DON'T GET IT...



"I REMEMBER ATTENDING THAT FIRST FUNERAL, AND SEEING 'THE GRATEFUL HOBOS' SOCIETY'S' CEMETERY FOR THE FIRST TIME."



"ASIDE TO THIS PLACE, AMERICA IS A CEMETERY, DUE TO DUST..."

"TEAR, BEAUTIFULLY IT ALMOST PAYS TO DIE PERRILLSS."

"AND I REMEMBER IN THE YEARS THAT FOLLOWED, RETURNING FROM TIME TO TIME AND SEEING THE ROLLING LAWNS WITH THE SINGLE GRAVE MARKERS."



"HOW DO WE MAKE IT LOOK NEAT, MR. COOPER? THE SOCIETY SAYS THIS IS THE MODERN WAY A CEMETERY SHOULD LOOK... SO I DO LIKE THAT GUY..."

I ONLY WORK FOR GRAVE MAINTENANCE HERE, MISTER. THE SOCIETY SAYS THIS IS THE MODERN WAY A CEMETERY SHOULD LOOK... SO I DO LIKE THAT GUY..."

"BUT AFTER A WHILE THE WORD OF 'THE GRATEFUL HOBOS' SOCIETY' BECAME STALE NEWS AND I TURNED TO OTHER THINGS. THEN, THIS MORNING, MY EDITOR CALLED ME IN."

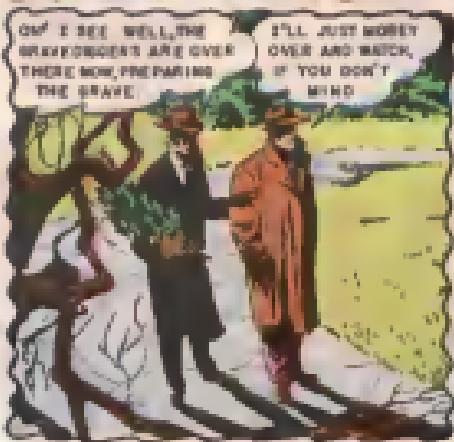
"EDITOR, YOU COVERED THE OPENING OF 'THE GRATEFUL HOBOS' SOCIETY'S CEMETERY FOR OUTCASTS AND UNWANTED, didn't you?"

"TEAR, CHIEF! WHAT'S UP?"

"WELL, ACCORDING TO THE OBFIT DEPARTMENT THEY'RE BURTING THE THOUSANDTH DERELICT TODAY. TAKE A RUN OUT AND COVER IT FOR US, MIGHT IT OUGHT TO BE NORTH A PARAPHRASE OR TWO."

SURE, CHIEF! HEY, MR. COOPER, SAY THE THOUSANDTH DERELICT?"





AFTER THE GRANDMOTHERS LEFT, I STOOD A WHILE LOOKING OUT OVER THE ROLLING LANDS WITH THE SIMPLE MARKERS AND THE NEW FRESH BRAVE-HOLES SITTING OUT LIKE A BORN THUMB...

THAT'S STRANGE!  
VERY STRANGE...

I WENT BACK TO THE CAR. I STARTED SCRATCHING AWAY ON MY MEMO-PAD. FISHERMAN:

JUST WHAT I THOUGHT!  
THERE ISN'T ENOUGH AREA  
IN THAT CEMETERY FOR A  
THOUSAND BRAVES!

I DROVE BACK TO THE CEMETERY AND HAD MY CAR. I CALLED THE FENCE, PICKED A HOME PLACE, AND WAITED... WATCHING IT FROM DARK...

I'LL FIND OUT I'LL FIND  
OUT WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT!

I STARTED PACING. I PACED ALONG THE RATE ON THE WEST SIDE OF THE CEMETERY. THEN I PACED ALONG THE RATE ON THE NORTH SIDE.

I'M RIGHT. I KNOW I'M RIGHT.

THERE WAS SOMETHING FISHY  
ABOUT THIS SET-UP. I KNEW IT.  
I TOOK A LAST LOOK AT THE  
SIMPLE HUMBLE GRAVE-SITES.

THEY MUST  
BE STACKIN'  
THEM ONE  
ABOVE THE  
OTHER... UNLESS...

AND DROVE TO THE NEAREST SHOPPING SECTION. I STOPPED AT A HARDWARE STORE.

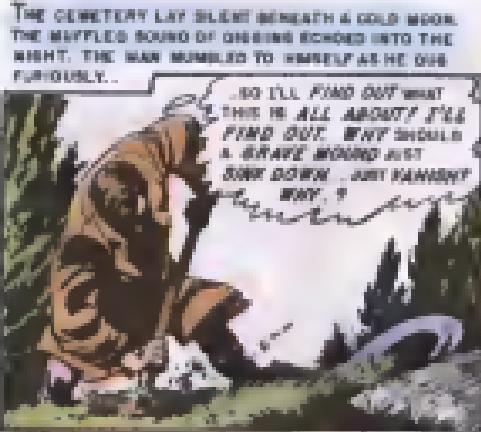
I'D LIKE TO BUY A SPADE.

AND THEN, SOME THING HAPPENED. SOMETHING WEIRD AND FRIGHTENING. THE SECOND, THE SIMPLE BRAVE-HOLE, SUNK DOWN INTO THE EARTH... SUNK DOWN UNTIL IT WAS LEVEL WITH THE SURROUNDING GRASS.

E GOOD LORD.

THE CEMETERY LAY SILENT BEHIND A GOLD MOON.  
THE MUFFLED SOUND OF GRIEVING ECHOED INTO THE  
NIGHT. THE MAN MUMBLED TO HIMSELF AS HE DUG  
FURIOUSLY...

"SO I'LL FIND OUT WHAT  
THIS IS ALL ABOUT! I'LL  
FIND OUT. WHY SHOULD  
A BRAVE BOYD JUST  
SINK DOWN... JUST VANISH?  
WHY?"



THE MAN CLEARED THE SOIL AWAY FROM THE METAL  
FLOOR OF THE GRAVE...

"THE COFFIN IS BROKEN! THIS...THIS  
IS A COFFIN. A COFFIN THAT OPENS  
BOWMARD!"



SHEERED THE METAL FLOOR  
BEHIND THE MAN'S FEET COLLAPSED AND HE PLUMMETED DOWN-  
WARD...



THE SOUND OF METAL SMASHING METAL NEVER ENDED  
IN THE DEEP HOLE THE MAN HAD DUG. HE LOOKED  
AROUND CONFUSED...

"METAL! THAT'S FUNNY. THE COFFIN WAS  
WOOD! AND, HEY! I'M A GOOD SIX FEET DOWN  
I SHOULD HAVE HIT THE COFFIN LONG AGO!  
THIS ISN'T THE COFFIN..."



THE MAN STOOD UP IN THE SHADE. HE STARED AT  
THE OLD HOUSE HE HAD SEEN BEYOND THE CEMETERY  
WALLS. THERE WERE LIGHTS ON INSIDE IT, SHINING  
THROUGH SHADED WINDOWS...



"GOOD EVENING,  
MR. SWEELEY. I  
THOUGHT I HEARD  
YOU KNOCKING."



"COFFIN!"

"IT IS TOO BAD  
THAT YOU DIS-  
COVERED OUR  
LITTLE SECRET,  
MR. SWEELEY."



"THIS IS HOW  
YOU CAN BURY  
A THOUSAND  
BOODLES IN A  
CEMETERY THAT  
COULDN'T HOLD  
SE HUNDRED."

EXACTLY MR. SWEENEY,  
AND HOW IF YOU WILL  
LEAD THE WAY  
BEHIND THIS DOOR I  
HAVE HERE, I WILL  
SHOW YOU OUR  
INTRICATE UNDER-  
GROUND NETWORK

BUT IDENTIFY  
WHY ALL  
TOGETHER?

AS A MATTER  
OF FACT, MR.  
SWEENEY, WE  
DIDN'T GET THE IDEA  
FROM A COMIC  
MAGAZINE! ER...  
NOTICE THAT THERE  
IS A STEEL TRAP  
DOOR BEHIND  
EACH BRAVE  
LOCATION. ALL  
THIS ELIMINATES  
BLOODSHED, YOU SEE!

THAT'S WHY  
THE BLOOD  
DRIES DOWN!  
ER... YOU SAY  
YOU GOT THE  
IDEA FROM A  
COMIC  
MAGAZINE?

YES A HORROR  
MAGAZINE, "TALES  
FROM THE CRYPT,"  
I BELIEVE. IN IT  
WAS A STORY CALLED  
"MIDNIGHT MESSY"  
UP THOSE STAIRS.  
PLEASE.

"MIDNIGHT  
MESSY"?  
WHAT WAS IT  
ABOUT?

IT WAS ABOUT AN ORGANIZATION OF  
VAMPIRES WHO ESTABLISHED A  
RESTAURANT WHERE THEY COULD  
GET THE BLOOD THEY NEEDED  
THROUGH THAT DOOR PLEASE.

THE BRAVEFOOL  
HOUSES IT  
VAMPIRENT

OH, MR. SWEENEY. MY HUSBAND  
APPLIED THE STORY TO OUR  
OWN NEEDS. ALL HE DID WAS  
BUY THIS HOUSE AND IS  
THERE PLEASE...

GOOD LORD!

THERE WERE TWENTY OR THIRTY OF THEM... SITTING AROUND THE SAME  
BANQUET TABLE... PATTING THEIR MOUTHS WITH THEIR NAPKINS...

MEET THE THREATFUL MONSTER OUTCASTS  
AND UNINVITED'S LADYFAT BOOGIEY, MR.  
SWEENEY. WE ARE WHAT OUR  
INITIALS STAND FOR...

CHOKE...

## GHOULS

HAN, HEE, HEEN! BIG, BODD,  
BEAN! STICK 'EM IN THE ASH  
CAN! HIS BONES ARE PICKED  
CLEAN! "HELLO!" THAT'S THE  
CRAZIESTTHING. GHEE, CRISPY  
NO QUITTING! AND NOW, IT'S TIME  
TO PUT OUT THE FIRE UNDER MY  
GRANSTY CAVALOARD AND CLOSE  
THE DOOR TO MY REVENGE  
RESTAURANT FOR FASTY  
TERROR TEE-  
BITS. WE'LL  
ALL SEE YOU  
NEXT IN THE  
WORLD OF  
MORROW. TILL  
THEN, NOT YOUR  
GHOST'S WORTH  
READ THIS WHOLE  
PAGE OVER AGAIN!  
I DARE YOU!

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